

THE REHEARSAL.

1. The Usefulness of Understanding aright 1. Cor. xiii.
2. That the *Charity* there mention'd Refers to the *Unity* of the *Church* and not to the *Poor*, further Prov'd from the *Description* of *Charity* there given.
3. From this *Charity* going with us to *Heaven*.
4. The pretence of *Edification* for *Schism*, on behalf of *Gifted-Men*:
5. This no Excuse, if they had all the *Gifts* they Pretend.
6. Even *Miraculous* Gifts may be Abus'd which is a *Demonstration* of *Free-Will*.
7. No such *Gifts* among our *Dissenters*.
8. The *Schism* at *Corinth* a Standard to Rule all after *Schisms*.
9. The *Phrase* of *Gifted-Men* has been *Providentially* kept up among *Us*.

WEDNESDAY, August 27. 1707.

(1.) Country-man.

I Thank you, Master, for helping me to Understand what is

meant by that *Charity* which is spoke of 1. Cor. xiii. For to many the sense and Meaning of that Admirable Chapter is lost, while they think it refers to no more than that *Charity* which is given to the *Poor*. Whereas (as you have Convin'd me) it has no Relation to that at all; because it supposes a Man to give all his Goods to feed the *Poor*, and yet not to have *Charity*. But when it is Understood of that *Love* and *Charity* which the *Members* of the *Church* (as of a Natural Body) ought to have to one another, and the Care of all to Preserve the Peace and *Unity* of the Body, how Excellent how Forceable how Eloquent is the *Apostle* here! He exerts all his *Strength* upon this Noble Subject; and the Expressions are Charming even to those who Mistake the meaning of them. And how Usefull will this be, when rightly understood, to those of this Age who make so Slight of the *Unity* of the *Church*, as to think it may be Broke upon every Trifling occasion! Nay not to Endure to hear it Nam'd, without throwing Dirt upon it, as Dr. Edwards in what you last Quoted out of his *Union-Sermon*, making this Pretence of the *Unity* of the *Church* the Source of all *Mischief*.

(2.) Rehears. How Diametrically Opposit is this to the Inspir'd *Apostle*! But because so much Depends upon the right Understanding of this Chapter, I will give you some further Proofs that the *Charity* here spoke of was with Relation to the *Unity* of the *Church*, and not that of feeding the *Poor*. The Pathetical Description of *Cha-*

rity which follows in this Chapter cannot be Apply'd to the *Poor*, but every word of it Refers to the *Unity* of the *Church*, and to that *Breach* was then made in it at *Corinth*, by mens *Vaunting* themselves in the *Spiritual* Gifts then liberally Bestow'd, and for this Refusing to Submit themselves to their Ordinary Superiors in the *Church*, who perhaps had not those Gifts. Hence they set up for one against another, some for *Paul*, some for *Apollos*, &c. But all this was a Breach of *Charity*, for, as the *Apostle* tells them, *Charity envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not Puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily Provoked. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, Endureth all things, rather than to make a Schism or Division in the Church.* This is the true Sense and meaning of the words, but they are no ways Applicable to that of Relieving the *Poor*.

(3.) Again, the next words make it yet Plainer, where the *Apostle* gives the Preference to *Charity* before all other Gifts, on Account of its Duration, even after this Life. *Charity never Faileth: but whether ther be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether ther be Tongues, they shall Cease; whether ther be Knowledge, it shall Vanish away: for we Know in Part, and we Prophesy in Part; but when that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in Part shall be done away. There will be an end of all these Gifts. But Charity go's with us to Heaven. And ther are no Poor to be Reliev'd there. But there is perfect Unity and the Love of it. Heaven is Unity, and Hell is Discord. And as we Promote the one or the other Here, we shall have our Portion with it There.*

(4.)

(4.) *Country-m.* This is a Terrible Consideration for those who make so little of the *Unity of the Church upon Earth*. But they say if I *Edeſie* more by the *Preaching* of one than another, why ſhou'd I not Hear that one rather than the other? And why do's *God* give more *Gifts* to one than another, if theſe *Gifts* may not be made uſe of? Many *Precious Gifted-Men* might be *Silenc'd* at this Rate.

Rehearſ. He has a ſtrange Opinion of his own *Gifts*, who thinks them ſo *Necceſſary* as that the *Church* and *Religion* ſhou'd fall without them! Or that they are worth *Dividing the Church*, and *Cauſing a Schiſm* on their Account! Theſe are *Modest Men* indeed! And likely to *Promote* that *Humility* requir'd in the *Gospel*! We have ſeen their *Gifts*, and *Felt* them, and can find nothing *Extraordinary* in them, but the *Fury of Pride* and *Lust of Oppoſition*!

(5.) But ſuppoſe they had all the *Gifts* they *Pretend* to, and a great deal more; ſuppoſe they had even the *Gift of Miracles*, of *Healing*, of *Languages*, &c. Suppoſe they Underſtood all *Mysteries* and all *Knowledge*; And cou'd ſpeak with the *Tongues of Men* and of *Angels*; And had *Faith* even to *Remove Mountains*; And a *Zeal* to give all their *Goods* to the *Poor*, and their very *Bodies* to be *Burnt*; yet, if we will take the *Apoſtles* Determination, all this wou'd be no *Warrant* to *Break* and *Divide the Unity of the Church*; All theſe *Gifts* wou'd ſignifie nothing, nor *Excuse* them from the *Guilt* and the *Condemnation* of *Tearing the Body of Chriſt* which is His *Church*. And the *Extraordinary Gifts* beſtow'd upon them, will be a *Great Aggravation* againſt them, that they made this ill uſe of them, to *Cauſe Schiſms* and *Diviſions* by them, rather than to *Heal the Breaches* and to *Preſerve the Peace* and *Unity of the Church*. For thus Our Lord has told Us, *Many will ſay to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy Name? And in thy Name have Caſt out Devils? And in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; Depart from me ye chat work Iniquity.*

(6.) *Country-m.* Then it is left to the *Freedom* of our *Will* to make ill uſe of and to *Abuſe* even *Miraculous Gifts* as well as *Natural*. This is a full *Demonſtration of Free-Will*, that the very *Gift of Miracles*, which *Exceed* all our own *Powers*, yet lay not any *Reſtraint* or *Force* upon our *Will*, which *God* has *Created Free*.

(7.) And, as you have ſaid, the *Condemnation* will be *Greater* of thoſe who turn even the *Gift of Miracles* to a *wrong uſe*, as of thoſe to whom *More* is given. Therefore let not ſuch (if any ſuch were amongſt us now) be *High-Minded* but *Fear*. But, alafs, there are none ſuch among us, but *Mén* ſet out upon their meer *Natural Parts*

(and *God* knows *Sorry* ones with many of them) and on Account of theſe, draw *Disciples* after them, and *Tear* and *Rend* the *Unity of the Church*.

(8.) *Rehearſ.* It pleas'd *God* to Permit that firſt *Schiſm* in the *Chriſtian Church*, which broke out at *Corinth*, and to overrule all the *Pretences* then ſet up for it; That all the *Leſſer Pretences* which ſhou'd be ſet up for *Schiſm* afterwards in the *Church*, might be left without *Excuse*; and *Mén* Deter'd from the *Heinouſneſs* of this *Sin of Schiſm*.

(9.) *Country-m.* It ſeems *Providential* that this Phraſe of *Gifted-Men* was ſo much us'd in the late *Times of Schiſm* and *Rebellion*, and is ſtill *Continu'd* among Us. For it leads *Mén* to think of thoſe *Miraculous Gifts*, which gave occaſion to that firſt *Schiſm* at *Corinth*. And there the *Madneſs* of our *Pretences* is ſhew'd and *Con-founded*, when our *Gifted-Men* are Compar'd with theſe truly *Gifted-Men* of whom the *Apoſtle* ſpoke, and whom he *Condemn'd*. How much more wou'd he have *Condemn'd* our *Wretchedly Gifted-Men*; and blam'd thoſe *Silly Souls* who wou'd be led into *Schiſm* by profound *Ignorance*, *Wry-Faces*, *Whining-Tones*, and *Strong-Lungs*, and had no other *Miracles* to ſhew! Nay we *Heap Teachers* to our ſelves from the *Hedges* and *High-Ways*, who can neither *Read* nor *Write*, *Ditchers* and *Day-Labourers*, to *Head* our *Schiſm* againſt the *Church*; ſome of which I can Name, not *Forty Miles* from *London*, who in order to obtain their *Licence* as *Preachers* from the *Juſtices of Peace* at the *Quarter Sessions*, being oblig'd by the *Act of Toleration* to ſubſcribe certain *Articles*, ſet their *Marks* inſtead of their *Names*, and had their *Licence* accordingly, no further *Qualification* being requir'd by the *Act*, as to their *Sufficiency* and *Learning*. Yet even theſe wou'd *Blame* the *Schiſm* of the *Corinthians*, if ever they *Heard* of it!

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